Met Office

NEWS

Building resilience to a changing climate across the Commonwealth

Author: Press Office
10:00 (UTC+1) on Thu 19 Apr 2018

The Met Office is helping develop weather forecasting capability and specialist climate change services for Commonwealth countries following the announcement of two new projects aimed at improving weather and climate resilience.

The Met Office has been at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London this week (16th - 20th) demonstrating our position as a global partner of choice for weather and climate services. Throughout the week, the Met Office has been showcasing our work across the Commonwealth and the wider international stage - highlighting our important position within the wider UK Government as we help them meet their own objectives around climate change and supporting greater resilience to weather and climate hazards.

Without urgent action to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, impacts of climate change could push an additional 100 million people across the world into poverty by 2030. This is extremely relevant for the Commonwealth where over two thirds of members are small or vulnerable states, and where climate change may have a disproportionate impact on people's lives, prosperity and security.

During the summit the UK Government has announced two different programmes involving the Met Office. The first, a Department for International Development (DFID) programme, will see a partnership between DFID, the Met Office and the World Bank on the Asia Regional Resilience to a Changing Climate (ARRCC) Programme aimed at strengthening weather forecasting systems across Asia.

The South Asia region is highly vulnerable to weather and climate impact such as flooding, droughts and cyclones. In the past two decades, over 50 % of South Asians, more than 750 million people have been affected by at least one natural disaster. Vulnerability to both extreme weather events, such as flooding and slow-onset hazards, such as drought, is expected to increase due to both growing populations in vulnerable areas and climate change.

The 4-year programme will target the most vulnerable countries in the region, primarily Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan and will deliver new technologies and innovative approaches to help communities use weather warnings and forecasts to better prepare for climate-related shocks.

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The second project, launched by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), will see the Met Office Hadley Centre take forward a number of Climate Services Pilot projects in Commonwealth member countries. Over the two years of the UK's Chairmanship of the Commonwealth Secretariat, countries will come together to generate vital information to better tackle climate change across the Commonwealth and improve knowledge and resilience to climate change.

Professor Stephen Belcher, the Met Office Chief Scientist, said: "The Commonwealth brings together a rich heritage and shared cultural values. But these aren't the only common bonds linking member states. Each is also inextricably connected by the shared impacts of weather and climate. Improving resilience and forecasting will provide a lifeline for vulnerable communities helping them to cope with weather and climate shocks through measures which improve food security and provide protection from extremes of weather. There can surely be no better aspiration than sharing cutting edge climate science to improve the fortunes and prospects of people in their day-to-day lives".

The Met Office is actively involved in a number of international projects across the Commonwealth, and more widely around the globe, aimed at building capacity within other national meteorological services, and sharing and developing science and innovation as well as working with partners to improve climate science understanding and resilience. Each year across the Commonwealth, natural disasters affect 28 million people and action to protect the environment and increase the resilience of member nations is essential.

The UK has been hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) this week, when leaders from all the member countries gathered in London. The aims were to address the shared global challenges and agree how to work together to create a better future.

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